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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: PRT MUTHANNA: MUTHANNA GOVERNOR CANCELS MEETING
WITH AMBASSADOR, PURPORTEDLY AT PM MALIKI,S INSISTENCE

REF: 09 BAGHDAD 1203

Classified By: PRT Team Leader John Kuschner for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)
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[1](#)1. (U) This is a PRT Muthanna reporting cable.

[1](#)2. (S) SUMMARY: Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki (PM) reportedly ordered Muthanna Governor Ibrahim Salman al-Mayali (State of Law) to cancel his February 10 meeting with Ambassador Hill in Baghdad. The Governor advised the PRT that the PM wanted to send a message that he was unhappy with the USG,s purported stance on the barring of candidates from the upcoming election. End summary.
COMPELLED TO DECLINE

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[1](#)3. (S) After indicating to the PRT,s LES that his appointment with the U.S. Ambassador was in doubt over sensitivity relating to the de-Ba,athification issue, Governor Mayali officially cancelled his February 10 call on the Ambassador on February 6. According to PRT LES, the Governor believed he was in a no-win situation: either appease his PM and irritate the USG or irritate his PM and keep the visit with the USG. The Governor,s brother, Nasir al-Mayali (a dual Iraqi-U.S. citizen) told PRT LES that he advised his brother that declining the invitation was a mistake.

[1](#)4. (S) When pressed for a reason prior to cancelling, Mayali stated, &My Prime Minister is not happy with the current U.S. position on the exclusion list and may not give me permission to attend.8 Mayali did not wish to cancel the meeting, but felt compelled to abide by instructions from the PM and political party boss. (Comment: Having come to power as a compromise choice, the PRT believes that Mayali has little independent political clout and does usually take unpopular positions (reftel) End Comment.)
EVENTFUL MEETING WITH THE GOVERNOR

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[1](#)5. (S) In a February 7 meeting with the Governor, PRT Team Leader (TL) acknowledged Mayali,s difficult position and assured him that the Ambassador would be willing to reschedule the meeting at a less sensitive time. Team Leader emphasized that the United States, position on Ba,athism has not changed, and that the USG respects the independence of Iraq,s judicial and electoral authorities. He rejected allegations that the U.S. Embassy exerted pressure on the GOI to intervene in the de-Ba,athification process. Mayali said that he appreciated the U.S. position, and the friendship of the PRT. He noted that some political parties were upset with alleged USG efforts over the exclusion list. The Governor asserted there were Ba,athists on the list and the Iraqi Constitution prevents Ba,athists from holding political office. He explained that politicians in Muthanna complained that the perceived interference was helping criminals and enemies of democracy. This caused ordinary people in Muthanna to accuse the USG of being occupiers and imperialists.

[1](#)6. (S) Mayali further stated that history shows that such people must not be given the right to run for office. He

cited post-World War II Germany, where Nazis were excluded from holding government positions. He passionately added that &given over 30 years of awful treatment by Saddam, the people are not willing to have the Ba,athists back in the government.⁸ The Governor asked that the United States be fair in this matter.

¶7. (S) Mayali wanted PRT to be aware that he had cancelled his meeting with the Ambassador on instructions from PM Maliki. He quickly added that he knew the Americans were not with the Ba,athists but that further clarification was needed to resolve this matter. The PRT TL urged the Governor to view the Ambassador,s television interview on this issue Qto view the Ambassador,s television interview on this issue broadcast on February 6 and 7.

COMMENT

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¶8. (S) COMMENT: The cancellation of the Governor,s visit is an obvious signal by PM Maliki of his displeasure with the USG over purported interference in the de-Ba,athification issue. Beyond that, it offered the PRT some insight to the extent to which Mayali takes his cues from Baghdad. Despite lobbying PRT for months to gain a meeting with the Ambassador, he caved to the demands of his PM. The action underscores his reputation for avoiding unpopular decisions. The scrubbed meeting demonstrates that political issues in Baghdad can and do have significant repercussions in the far reaches of Iraq. END COMMENT.

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